

William C. Robinson House
103 Point Street
Saltsburg
Indiana County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5418

HABS
PA,
32-SALT,
14-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WILLIAM C. ROBINSON HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5418

Location: 103 Point St., Saltsburg, Conemaugh Township, Indiana County, Pennsylvania.

Present Owner: Richard P. Weaver.

Present Use: Single-family residence.

Significance: The William C. Robinson House is significant as one of a handful of dwellings located in the block of Point Street between the river and the canal; it was constructed along this main street prior to mid-century when this was the town center.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1843-49, according to deed records.
2. Original and subsequent owners: The following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands, historically the east half of lot No. 11. Reference is to the Recorder of Deeds Office of the County of Indiana, Pennsylvania.

1839 Deed September 10, 1839, Volume 11, Page 83.
James Speer
TO
Thomas and John Robinson (entire lot No. 11)

1843 Deed March 18, 1843, Volume 12, Page 685.
Thomas and John Robinson
TO
William C. Robinson

1843 Deed October 25, 1843, Volume 13, Page 150.
William C. Robinson
TO
James R. Dougherty

1846 Deed April 1, 1846, Volume 15, Page 299.

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James R. and Mary Anne Daugherty (sic)
TO
Dr. Thomas Murrey (sic)

1848 Deed June 19, 1848, Volume 16, Page 28.
Dr. Thomas Murray
TO
William C. Robinson (sale of east half lot No. 11 only)

1859 Deed March 26, 1859, Volume 24, Page 481.
William C. and Jane Robinson
TO
James and Jennie Rodgers (half lot No. 11 hereafter)

1877 Deed September 8, 1877, Volume A-45, Page 422.
James and Jennie Rodgers
TO
Robert A. Martin

1883 Deed January 20, 1883, Volume A-45, Page 425.
Robert A. Martin
TO
George Martin

1947 Deed February 14, 1947, Volume 381, Page 544.
Ord Kenley Martin, et al. (George Martin's heirs)
TO
Sarah Hazel Martin

1970 Deed October 2, 1970, Volume 614, Page 24.
Sarah Hazel Martin
TO
Richard P. Weaver

3. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located. The building was erected as a rectangular, side-gable brick block.
4. Alterations and additions: The side and rear portions of the building have been altered by the addition of a two-story frame structure (now sided with aluminium). Between 1886-91, existing one- and two-story frame additions were removed and replaced with a two-story frame block

measuring about 30' x 25'.

The front facade also featured a full, one-story frame porch (Sanborns). The present porch on the westernmost bay protects the front door. The diamond-shaped, stained-glass window on the west facade is not original.

- B. Historical Context: A cluster of buildings including 101 and 103 Point St. were constructed during the late 1840s in this important location between Water Street and the Kiskiminetas River on the west and the canal to the east.

Dr. Thomas Murray acquired this property without any structures on it from William Robinson in 1846; it included the land on the west, what is now 101 Point St. A year later he commissioned the house. Murray hailed from the Susquehanna Valley in southern Pennsylvania. There he earned a medical degree before attending lectures at the University of Pennsylvania. Murray arrived in Saltsburg in 1837 and quickly established a lucrative practice. He served as a town burgess in 1838 and elder in the Presbyterian Church in 1858; he eventually retired to a farm on nearby Elder's ridge (formerly Watson's ridge).

For additional context, twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg may be consulted, as well as overview histories of the town of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438) and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666). See also, Sara Amy Leach, ed., Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (Washington, DC: Historica American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: This modest brick, two-story, three-bay mass represents a typical vernacular Federal-style dwelling.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall Dimensions: 20' x 25', with a frame addition measuring 25' x 30'.

2. Foundation: Stone.
 3. Walls: Main block is brick laid in five-course American bond; aluminium siding atop frame on the rear addition.
 4. Structural systems: Load-bearing brick and frame.
 5. Porches: A post-1920s raised, one-story entry porch is constructed of wood, set on a concrete foundation with a hipped roof covered with asphalt shingles.
 6. Chimneys: There are two interior brick chimneys, one at the east gable end; one at the gable-end of the rear ell.
 7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The single, partially glazed front door is located in the westernmost bay of the Point Street facade; it features a wide, plain wood architrave trim. A door on the west facade is accessed through the frame addition.
 - b. Windows: On the main facade, the three second-floor windows are unframed, with predominant sills and lintels, with one-over-one-light double-hung sash. The two windows on the first-floor feature distinguishing but simple wood architrave trim, and contain asymmetrical one-over-one-light, double-hung sash. The diamond-shaped, stained-glass window on the west facade was installed later.
 8. Roof: Side-gable with slightly higher ridge line where the cross gable intersects with the frame addition.
- C. Site: The dwelling faces Point Street in the block between the Conemaugh River and the canal right of way; to the east, west, and south are additional residences; to the north is an alley.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Old Views and maps:

The collection of the Saltsburg Branch, Historical and Genealogical Society of Indiana County, Stone House Museum, contains numerous historical images.

Beers, F.W. Atlas of Indiana County. New York: F.W. Beers and Co., 1871.

Johnson, George B., and Palmer, Ann. Saltsburg--The Way It Was--An Appreciation. Indiana, Pa.: A.G. Halldin Publishing Co., 1986.

Peelor, David, and Barker, W. "Map of Indiana County, Pennsylvania." North Hector, New York: 1856.

"Saltsburg, Pa." New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co. Ltd., February 1886; New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., October 1891, January 1897, July 1903; New York: Sanborn Map Company, April 1909, February 1927.

B. Primary and unpublished sources:

Indiana County, Pennsylvania, deed books and tax records.

C. Secondary and published sources:

Arms, C.T., and White, E. 1745-1880, History of Indiana County, Pennsylvania. Newark, Ohio: J. A. Caldwell, 1880.

Berringer, Gloria, ed. Canal Days Sesquicentennial: 1838-1988. No publisher, 1988.

Biographical and Historical Cyclopedia of Indiana and Armstrong Counties. Philadelphia: John M. Gresham and Co., 1891; reprinted 1982.

Johnson, George. Saltsburg and the Pennsylvania Canal. Historic Saltsburg, 1984.

McCullough, Robert, and Leuba, Walter. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal. York, Pa.: American Canal and Transportation Center, 1973.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory, "Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal: Indiana and Westmoreland Counties." 1979/82.

Stewart, J.T. Indiana County, Pennsylvania: Her People, Past and Present. Chicago: F.W. Beers and Co., 1913.

Wallner, Peter A. "Politics and Public Works: A Study of the Pennsylvania Canal System, 1825-1857." Ph.D diss., Pennsylvania State University, June 1973.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record in cooperation with the America's Industrial Heritage Project under the directorship of Randy Cooley; AIHP is an undertaking of the National Park Service, based in Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania. Recorded under the direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, the project was completed during summer 1988 at the HABS field office in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Project leader was Alison K. Hoagland, senior HABS historian; field supervisor was Dorothy Burlingame, University of Vermont; project historian, Kristin Belz, University of Virginia. Large-format photography is by David Ames. Editing of the final report was done by Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

This report was completed as part of a larger project documenting two canal towns--Saltsburg, on the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Mainline Canal, and Alexandria, on the Juniata Division--flanking the Allegheny Divide. Twenty-one reports on other buildings in Saltsburg, an overview history of Saltsburg (HABS No. PA-5438), and of canal town development in Pennsylvania (HABS No. PA-5666) are part of the HABS/HAER collection. Twenty-two reports on buildings in Alexandria (Huntingdon County) and an overview history of Alexandria (HABS No. PA-5407) are also available. Results of the project were published as Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg, Sara Amy Leach, editor (Washington, DC: Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service, March 1989).